Stray Creek Project Forest Plan Consistency

Review of the Forest Plan management direction that may be applicable to this project has shown that the project is consistent with the Forest Plan, as shown below (USDA Forest Service, 1987).

A. Forest Plan Standards

The following standards apply to the National Forest land administered by the Clearwater National Forest. They are intended to supplement, not replace, the National and Regional policies, standards, and guidelines found in Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks and the Northern Regional Guide.

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General	
d. Insure proposed practices and management activities are coordinated with other governmental agencies and Indian tribes to insure requirements of all laws and regulations are met and terms of Indian Treaties are upheld.	Other government agencies such as Idaho Department of Lands, Department of Transportation, and Department of Fish and Game received the proposed action for scoping. Consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe has occurred and is ongoing. The Section 16 project has been presented to the Nez Perce Tribe staff at quarterly meetings since July of 2019.
Recreation and Visual	
j. Manage the visual resource in the Clearwater National Forest by using the visual management system (VMS) which specifies visual quality objectives (VQO's) on designated landscapes as described in the current U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbook on National Forest landscape management. (Also see Chapter III, management area direction.)	The Stray Creek project would comply with Forest Plan forest-wide standards for visual resources. All landscape-altering activities would meet adopted Clearwater National Forest Plan Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). See supporting visual effects analysis documentation located in the project record.
Cultural Resources	
b. Identify and evaluate appropriate sites for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, primarily in conjunction with surveys of potential impact project areas, but also backlog areas on a priority basis.	Sites within the APE associated with this project will be identified and evaluated for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
Wildlife and Fish	
a. Provide the proper mix of hiding and thermal cover, forage, and protection from harassment during critical periods on big-game summer range (primarily elk). in accordance	The Project would increase opening for big-game summer range by 11% in the affected area. Elk analysis details are available in the project record. The affected elk analysis

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with criteria contained in the "Guidelines for Evaluating and Managing Summer Elk Habitat in Northern Idaho."	areas meets the Forest Plan Standards of maintaining elk habitat (see Elk effects analysis).
c. Provide habitat for snag-dependent indicator species (pileated woodpecker and goshawk) in accordance with guidelines provided in Appendix H.	Old growth and snag retention is maintained in project area as described in in the description of the proposed action. See Forest Vegetation analysis for meeting old growth standards.
d. Provide for old-growth dependent wildlife species by: (1) Maintaining at least 10 percent of the Forest (including Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness) in old-growth habitat. (2) Selecting at least 5 percent of each approximate 10,000 acre watershed (timber compartment) or combination of smaller watersheds (subcompartments) within forested nonwllderness areas to manage as old-growth habitat.	A minimum of 5% of each approximate 10,000 acre watershed (timber compartment) or combination of smaller watersheds (subcompartments) that crosses the project area is being managed as old-growth habitat.
f. Provide an adequate amount of habitat to support the Clearwater Forest's assigned goal of ten endangered gray wolves as based on recommendations from the Northern Rocky Mountam Recovery Team. (See Regional Guide.)	Habitat is maintained or altered to provide increased big game forage over all seasons; thereby, increasing the prey base for wolves.
g. Cooperate with future recovery efforts on behalf of the gray wolf, bald eagle, and grizzly bear.	Habitat is managed for increased forage for big game. This would provide an increased prey base for the wolf and bear. Grizzly bear is not considered as a species with occupied habitat on the Forest. The project area is not considered as nesting habitat for the bald eagle.
j. Cooperate with Idaho Fish and Game, Indian tribes, and other agencies in the management of wildlife and fish habitat.	Idaho Fish & Game, other local agencies, and Nez Perce Tribe have been notified of project activities through scoping and informal consultation.
Timber	
a. Require silvicultural examination and prescriptions before any vegetative manipulation takes place. Exceptions Include right-of-way clearing and maintenance, hazard tree removals, mineral and other special-use developments, and free-use salvage or other	Silvicultural prescriptions will be written during implementation, and will address site-specific needs in the stand.

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permits.	
b. Design timber sales to consider cost-effectiveness while maintaining the long-term sustained yield and protecting the soil and water resources.	Project is designed to maintain long-term sustained yield while protecting soil and water resources. Cost-effectiveness was considered while determining the unit layout and logging systems.
g. Perpetuate western white pine as a commercial tree species.	The Stray Creek project proposes reforestation of western white pine where appropriate.
h. Plan for adequate restocking on all lands managed for timber within five years after final removal.	The Stray Creek project would be in compliance with this standard in that regeneration harvest areas will be adequately restocked within five years after harvest.
i. Guide vegetation management by the Vegetation Management Practices and Habitat Type Guidelines (Appendix A), and the Northern Regional Guide.	This will be done through the use of Silviculture prescriptions that adhere to guidelines in Appendix A.
j. Manage tree openings created by even-age timber harvest as follows: (1) Size of openings - Openings created will normally be 40 acres or less, see Regional Guide for exceptions: (2) Dispersal - The objective is to disperse openings so that adjacent stands will represent at least three size classes, see Regional Guide; (3) Duration of openings - consider an opening no longer an opening when the density and height of the vegetation and watershed conditions meet the resource management objectives of the area. <u>Big-Game Summer Range/ Timber</u> - In proposed El and E3 Management Areas. the minimum standard is to provide 25 percent elk habitat potential. New openings (regeneration cuts) can be planned adjacent to former openings as long as the former opening is certified as stocked and the area meets a minimum of 25 percent elk habitat potential after implementation of the proposed activity. The ID Team must assure that unit design optimizes wildlife objectives, both short-and	Direction in Forest Service Manual 2470, Region 1 Supplement #R1 2400-2016-1, Section 2471.1 states that the size of openings created by even-aged silvicultural treatments in the Northern Rockies will normally be 40 acres or less, with certain exceptions. The request to exceed 40-acre openings documentation will be available in the project record prior to a final decision notice once the public has been notified and the Regional Forester has approved the request. The Project would increase opening for big-game summer range by 11% in the affected area. Elk analysis details are available in the project record. The affected elk analysis area meets the Forest Plan Standards of maintaining elk habitat (see Elk effects). The Stray Creek project would retain trees for reasons such as existing seed source, intermittent shade, or other resource needs, such as wildlife or visuals. BMPs listed in the design criteria will be implemented to prevent onsite surface

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long-term, within the overall objectives of the management area. Other resource requirements and objectives such as visual, watershed, silvicultural, etc., also must be met as applicable. The dispersal of timber size class objectives in the Regional Guide must be met. Watershed - Onsite determinations of the effect of openings for watershed and water resources will be generally required in three circumstances: a) when the site is subject to significant surface erosion; b) when water yield (streamflow or subsurface water) is an apparent issue; and c) in riparian areas. (a) To prevent significant onsite surface erosion, the watershed definition for an "opening" is when the soil surface is exposed to the extent that overland flow occurs, gullies or rills can develop, or intense rainfall (raindrop splash) can cause downslope movement of ~011. The criteria for an opening in this case is generally that vegetative cover is 80 percent or less. Cover can be any vegetation (not just trees) that effectively intercepts rainfall and provides an extensive root mass. Deciduous species provide varying degrees of cover seasonally. (b) Under some circumstances, water yields can cause adverse affects as a result of modifications of forest cover. For purposes of controlling water yield from a site, the watershed definition for an "opening" is described by height of the tree crowns above the normal snowpack, and the relative vegetative occupation of the site. The criteria for an opening in this case is when the normal maximum snow depth exceeds the height of the timber overstory, or when the site is not fully occupied by timber regeneration. (c) An opening in riparian areas is defined by a complex set of characteristics. In addition to the watershed, water resources, and wildlife criteria for an opening, an opening would be present in a riparian area when the terrestrial vegetation cannot provide shade, buffering from upslope erosion or water yields, or	erosion. The Stray Creek project will increase water yield to just over 22%, which remains on the lower end of the threshold where channel changes may occur as a result of increased water yield (Bosch and Hewlett 1982, Stednick 1996). Predicted flow increases potential impacts on channel stability should be mitigated by the remaining trees and intact vegetation left in the units and intact riparian buffers. The Stray Creek project will not harvest with PACFISH RHCAs.

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structural bank support contiguously along more than 400 feet of one bank of a water body.	
Water	
a. Secure favorable conditions of flow by maintaining the integrity and equilibrium of all stream systems in the Forest.	No significant increase in peak flow due to proposed actions. Channel processes would not be altered.
b. Manage water quality and stream conditions to assure that National Forest management activities do not cause permanent or long-term damage to existing or specified beneficial uses. (See Appendix K, Section A.)	Some increase in peak flow and short-term sediment input is possible. Beneficial uses would be maintained or not further degraded.
c. Apply best management practices (BMP) to project activities to ensure water quality standards are met or are exceeded. (See Soil and Water Conservation Handbook in Forest Service Handbook 2509.22.)	BMPs listed in the design criteria will be implemented.
d. Manage all waters in the Forest under a basic standard. (See Appendix K, section B.) This standard will be supplemented where applicable by the standards in "e" or other criteria related to local uses or conditions.	Project activities are designed and managed to meet appropriate standards.
e. In addition to standard d., manage all watershed systems In the Forest that are considered important for the fishery resource (anadromous and resident fish) to meet standards 1. through 4. below (ln descending order of quality): (See Appendix K, Section B.) (1) No Effect - Applies to the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River (Forest boundary to the confluence of the Lochsa and Selway Rivers); the Lochsa River; White Sand Creek: Crooked Fork ; Brushy Fork (mouth to Spruce Creek); North Fork of the Clearwater River (low pool to Meadow Creek): Little North Fork Clearwater River; Kelly Creek; Weitas Creek (mouth to Windy Creek); Cayuse Creek (mouth to Howard Creek); Hungery Creek: and all the waters within wilderness. (2) High Fishable - Applies to most of the waters of the North Fork, Lochsa, and Powell Ranger Districts including most of the main tributaries of the North Fork of the Clearwater	

Standard	Project Consistency
River, Little North Fork of the Clearwater River. Kelly Creek, Cayuse Creek, Weitas Creek, Middle Fork of the Clearwater River, Lochsa River, White Sand Creek, Brushy Fork, and Crooked Fork; the main tributaries of Weitas Creek and Lolo Creek and its main tributaries on the Pierce Ranger District; and Elk Creek above Deer Creek on the Palouse Ranger District. (3) Moderate Fishable - Applies to some of the waters within the developed portion (roaded as of 1984) of the Canyon area of the North Fork Ranger District, including Beaver Creek; and to Middle Creek on the Pierce Ranger District. (4) Low Fishable - Applies to some of the waters wlthln the developed portion (roaded as of 1984) of the Pierce Ranger District including Orofino Creek, French Creek, and Orogrande Creek; but excluding Lolo Creek and its tributaries (Yoosa Creek and Eldorado Creek). (5) Minimum Viable - Applies to most of the waters within the Palouse District including the mainstems of the Palouse River and the Potlatch River and their tributaries, except for the mainstem of Elk Creek above Deer Creek. (See item [2].)	
g. Design, schedule, and implement management practices at the project level that: (1) will maintain water quality and stream conditions that are not likely to cause sustained damage to the biological potential of the fish habitat. (2) will not reduce fish habitat productivity in the short-term below the assigned standards. (3) will maintain water quality m a condition that is not likely to inhibit recovery of the fish habitat for more than the stated duration (see Appendix K for these recovery periods); and (4) will require a watershed cumulative effects feasibility analysis of projects involving significant vegetation removal, prior to including them on implementation schedules,	Project design criteria measures listed to maintain water quality, channel conditions, and fish habitat.

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to ensure that the project, considered with other activities, will not increase water yields or sediment beyond acceptable limits. Also require that this analysis identify any opportunities for mitigating adverse effects on water-related beneficial uses, including capital investments for fish habitat or watershed improvement.	
i. In watersheds with significant mixed ownership. major mining impacts, etc. improvement will be done through cooperative management schedules worked out with the appropriate landowners under coordinated leadership by the State of Idaho. The Forest will cooperate with other owners in mitigation of adverse effects, at least to the extent that Forest management activities have caused these adverse effects.	Watershed Restoration work with partners is ongoing at the HUC 12 scale and no opportunities for joint restoration with IDL were identified during this project."
k. Conduct nonpoint source activities in accordance with applicable best management practices as referenced in Idaho Water Quality Standards and Wastewater Treatment Requirements; and in Soil and Water Conservation Handbook in the Forest Service Handbook 2509.22.	BMPs and design criteria will be implemented.
Lands	
a. Locate and mark National Forest/ private land interior and exterior boundaries to accomplish the following: (1) Protect present corners or reference of same when possibility of disturbance during land use activities exists. (2) Locate boundaries near ongoing and planned resource projects and special management areas. (3) Resolve or prevent encroachments. (4) Assist Forest users in identifying National Forest system lands.	Where vegetation management activities occur within one-quarter mile of the National Forest boundary, surveys take place to confirm land boundaries, easements, etc.
Soils	
a. Manage activities on lands with ash caps such that bulk densities on at least 85 percent of the area remain at or below 0.9 gram/ cubic	The project has been designed to limit the extent of detrimental soil disturbance (DSD) to no more than 15% of a project area following the completion of all project

Standard	Project Consistency
centimeter.	activities. Because compaction is a contributing factor to DSD, adhering to the 15% standard addresses this Forest Plan standard.
b. Design resource management activities to maintain soi1 productivity and minimize erosion.	Project design features have been developed for this project based on a combination of monitoring results, scientific research, best management practices, and professional experience. These design features are intended specifically to maintain soil productivity and minimize erosion during and following project activities.
c. The minimum coordinating requirements for projects on land types with high or very high mass stability or parent material erosion hazard ratings are: (1) The field verification of the mapped unit and predicted hazard rating. (2) Review road locations using a team consisting of a engineering geologist, hydrologist, soi1 scientist, and a silviculturist. Assess concerns and possible mitigation measures to determine if a geotechnical Investigation is needed. (3) After the "P" line has been located, stake mitigating road designs, using the original ID team members and road designer.	No temporary roads are planned in areas with high mass wasting potential risk. Roughly 0.35 miles of temporary road is proposed on a landtype that has been mapped as having high parent material erosion risk. All temporary roads will be scarified and recontoured following the completion of all project activities (see Project Design Features), thereby mitigating any long-term increases in subsurface erosion risk.
d. Review silvicultural prescriptions and unit locations on land type 50 (old slumps) to determine whether vegetation removal (timber harvesting) may contribute to slope instability.	No harvest is planned to take place where land type 50 occurs.
e. Give special attention to compacted glacial tills in the Powell area. When projects are proposed in areas where compacted tills are known to occur or suspected to occur, an intensive soil map will be prepared and ground verified. Mitigation measures should be applied that will assure that water tables will not be raised or that subsurface water will not be converted to surface flows. Measures will also be applied to assure that soi1 erosion and resulting lowering of soi1 productivity will not	This standard does not apply to the project because it is outside the scope of the project. There are no compacted glacial tills present in the Stray Creek project area.

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occur.	
Facilities-Transportation System	
c. Obliterate temporary roads when specific resource management needs are met. Remove all drainage structures and revegetate disturbed soils.	Temporary roads will be fully recontoured when resource management needs are met.

B. Management Area Direction

Management Area direction for Management Area E1 applies to this project.

Management Area	Name
E1	Timber Management

MANAGEMENT AREA E1 (503,567 Acres)

A. Description

This, the largest block of land within the Forest, contains generally the most productive timber land in the Forest. The area contains approximately 422,390 acres that have been developed for timber harvest in the past and approximately 81,177 acres of presently undeveloped land. Productivity potential ranges from 20 cubic feet per acre per year to over 170 cubic feet per acre per year. Most of the area is also suitable big-game summer range with white-tailed deer the predominant species in the Palouse District and elk the predominant species in the rest of the Forest. The area also contains considerable sections of intermingled private land in the Powell, Kelly Creek, and Palouse Districts. In many drainages in the Palouse District, the El lands occupy less acreage than the intermingled private land. A large block of private land is also found intermingled with El land in the Orogrande drainage of the Pierce District.

B. Goals

Provide optimum, sustained production of wood products. Timber production is to be cost effective and provide adequate protection of soil and water quality. Manage viable elk populations within areas of historic elk use based on physiological and ecological needs. Manage a range of water quality and fish habitat potential from high fishable in several of the key anadromous and resident fish streams to a low fishable in the Palouse District and portions of the Pierce District. (See Forestwide Standards and Appendix K).

C. Goals and Standards

RESOURCE ELEMENT	GOALS OR STANDARDS	PROJECT CONSISTENCY
The Forestwide management direction included in Chapter II applies to this management area.		
RECREATION	STANDARDS b. Manage areas seen from Management Areas A4, A5, and A6 to meet the adopted VQOs shown in Appendix G.	A small portion of harvest proposed by the Stray Creek project can potentially be seen from MA A6. It would be screened by vegetation and would meet the VQO of *Modification* in the background.

RESOURCE ELEMENT	GOALS OR STANDARDS	PROJECT CONSISTENCY
WILDLIFE AND FISH	STANDARDS b. Manage for a minimum of 25 percent maximum elk potential habitat effectiveness. During Plan implementation and further analysis, determine whether remaining areas of El have potential for providing elk habitat. When analysis shows elk potential is limited by factors other than National Forest management, determinations may be made not to manage for elk. When habitat conditions warrant, managers are urged to exceed the 25 percent habitat standard. See Forestwide General Standards, in Chapter II.	The proposed action would increase opening for big-game summer range by 11% in the affected area. Elk analysis details are available in the project record. The affected elk analysis area meets the Forest Plan Standards of maintaining elk habitat (see Elk effects).
TIMBER	STANDARDS a. Schedule timber harvest using logging and silvicultural methods appropriate for the stand and the terrain. b. Maintain stocking control commensurate with the level of management intensity. c. Identify and maintain suitable old-growth stands and replacement habitats for snag and old-growth dependent wildlife species in accordance with criteria in Appendix H.	Old growth and snag retention is maintained in project area as described in in the description of the proposed action. See Forest Vegetation analysis for meeting old growth standards.
WATER and SOIL	STANDARD Utilize best management practices and meet water quality standards as defined in the Forestwide standards and Appendix K.	See Forest-wide standard compliance above

PACFISH/PACFISH

In 1995, the Clearwater Forest Plan incorporated PACFISH/INFISH standards and guidelines following a joint decision by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management for managing fish-producing watersheds on Federal lands. This interim direction identifies and defines Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs), establishes Riparian Management Objectives (RMOs), and applies standards and guidelines to RHCA to meet the RMOs. Default RHCAs include those areas within 300 feet of fish bearing streams, within 150 feet of non-fish bearing streams, and within 100 feet of intermittent streams and wetlands. These buffer widths exceed state best management practice standards. Activities that do not meet the RMOs are not allowed within default RHCAs. The standards and guides from PACFISH would be applied to the project.

Forest Plan Stipulation Agreement

Litigation on the Clearwater Forest Plan resulted in a Stipulation Agreement (The Wilderness Society, et al., v. F. Dale Robertson, et al., Stipulation of Dismissal (Civil No. 93-0043-S-HLR), Sept. 1993) that discusses what type of activities the Forest could proceed with and under what conditions. The Agreement states "The Forest Service agrees to proceed only with those projects that would result in no measurable increase in sediment production in drainages currently not meeting Forest Plan standards." The project has been designed to cause no measurable increase in sediment at the mouths of Forest Plan streams.